

Carlow County Council – Social Housing FAQ's

1. I am homeless / at risk of becoming homeless. What do I do?

Carlow County Council has a dedicated homeless team who provide a range of supports. If you consider you are homeless, please contact our homeless team at homeless@carlowcoco.ie, by phone to 059/9170300 or call to our Homeless Hub on the Staplestown Road in Carlow town. During your assessment, the team will discuss the range of emergency options available.

If as a member of the public you see someone sleeping in their car or on the streets, please contact the Homeless Team using the above details.

2. Am I eligible for social housing support?

To qualify for social housing in Ireland, you must have a long term legal right to reside in the State, be in genuine need of housing and have an income below a certain threshold. All social housing applications are assessed on both eligibility and need as set out in the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. You will also have to prove details of your need to live in County Carlow. The current income bands for social housing eligibility in Carlow range from net household income under €35,000 per year for a single person up to €42,000 per year for a 7 person household. If your income is within the current parameters, complete and submit a social housing application form and provide the supporting documents listed on the form. Social Housing Application form is available on our website www.carlow.ie

3. How do I apply for social housing?

Complete the Social Housing application form and submit the form along with the supporting documents to the Housing Department for assessment. Your application should be processed within a 12 week period unless further information is required. Social Housing application forms are available from our website www.carlow.ie

4. Who can apply for social housing in County Carlow?

Eligibility to apply for social housing is set out in the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011.

A household can apply for social housing in Carlow if:-

- They normally reside in Carlow,
- They have a local connection to Carlow,
- The local authority agrees to assess the case in exceptional circumstances.

Local Connection to Carlow

- Household member has lived in Carlow for a continuous 5 years at any time,
- Household member works within 15km of the area,
- Household member is in full time education at a university, school or any other educational establishment in the area,
- Household member has an enduring physical, sensory, mental health, intellectual impairment and is attending a medical or residential facility in the area for that impairment,
- A relative of a household member has lived in the area for 2 years.

- Relative is defined as being a parent, adult child or sibling, step parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle who has close links with the household member in the form of commitment or dependence (this must be documented eg. carers)

5. I have been asked for further information to support my application?

As part of assessing your application, the Housing Authority may seek any further information it needs to fully consider your situation. You have 4 weeks to return the information requested. You can ask for an extension to this 4 weeks in writing if you need to do so. Your application cannot be processed until all information is available.

6. My application has been refused, what do I do?

Your refusal letter will state the reason(s) for refusal. You might be over the income thresholds, have alternative housing available to you, not have the relevant legal permission to apply for social housing etc.

The steps to appeal the decision will be on the bottom of the refusal letter. Please include any relevant documents with your appeal.

7. My application was approved for Housing Assistance Payment only. Why?

There are a number of situations where HAP(Housing Assistance Payment) is the only support that can be offered to a household. For example, this may include the surrender of a tenancy due to separation/divorce, awaiting compensation or marital separation and/or where you cannot provide sufficient information to the housing authority for them to fully process your application at the time. HAP only supports are regularly reviewed for eligibility. If on review, you are not eligible your application will be closed. If on review you are eligible, you will be awarded full social housing supports. Failure to respond to a HAP only supports review will result in your application being closed.

8. My application has been approved for full Social Housing supports, what happens next?

Your name will go on the social housing list from the date of your application being approved. You will receive a letter stating you have been approved which will include a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) pack. You are encouraged to consider HAP supports in the private rental market while you wait for a social housing allocation. Your application will be assessed annually under the SSHA process for eligibility and need and will be assessed again when your application approaches allocation stage. All allocations are made in accordance with Carlow County Council's Scheme of Letting Priorities which is available on our website www.carlow.ie

9. What is Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)?

HAP is a social housing support scheme for those with long term housing needs. HAP provides financial supports to allow those on the social housing list to accommodation rent privately. The HAP rent payable to the landlord is based on your household type and is paid directly to your landlord. You pay a differential rent which is based on the income for your household. If the monthly rent is over the limit payable for your household type, you might need to pay a top up payment directly to the landlord. Further information the HAP scheme is available from www.hap.ie

10. I was approved for social housing supports and have been asked to update my details under the Summary of Social Housing Assessment (SSHA). What is this?

Carlow County Council are required to complete an SSHA return to the Department of Housing Each year. The SSHA shows the total number of qualifying households whose social housing need is not being met. So if you were approved for social housing and are not in HAP, AHB, RAS or SHECP you will not receive an SSHA letter. The letter will include forms for you to complete and return showing that you are still eligible for and have a need for social housing supports in County Carlow. Failure to respond to the SSHA will result in removal from the social housing list.

11. I was approved for social housing supports and have been asked to update my details with the Housing Department. Why?

All those on the social housing waiting will be reassessed periodically for eligibility and need. You will be asked to return the required information and may be asked to provide additional information at a later stage.

12. I am on the social housing waiting list and have been offered an allocation in a Local Authority, Approved Housing Body (AHB) or Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) property.

You have been offered a social housing tenancy. A formal letter of offer will be issued, and you will be required to respond within a specified timeframe. Once you accept your offer, you will be given an appointment to sign your tenancy agreement which is a legally binding document and you will receive the keys to your property. You may be eligible to apply for a means tested grant from the Department of Social Welfare to assist you with furnishing your new property. You will receive pre tenancy training and advised how to pay your rent and manage your tenancy.

13. I am on the social housing waiting list for over a year now. What are the waiting times for a social housing allocation?

Waiting times vary depending on a number of factors including time on list, household need, availability of suitable properties for your household in your chosen area. As there is no guaranteed timeframe, HAP applicants are encouraged to avail of HAP supports.

14. What happens if I refuse an offer?

Refusals are either reasonable or unreasonable.

First Unreasonable refusal - you will remain on the list and the date of refusal is recorded. Second Unreasonable refusal you will be suspended from list for 12 months.

15. Can I change my areas of choice?

Yes, you can update your areas of choice but you must do so in writing to the Housing Section. You can only change your area of choice once every 12 months. Changes may affect your waiting time for a particular area.

16. What if my circumstances change?

You are required to notify the Housing Section immediately if there are any changes relevant to your social housing application including (but not limited to):

- Your household size changes
- Your income changes
- You change address
- You no longer hold a valid Stamp or Visa.
- Your relationship status changes.

All Social Housing Applicants are reassessed during the annual SSHA process.

All social housing applicants are reassessed at allocation stage for both eligibility and need. If you are an existing tenant, it is a requirement of your tenancy to notify the Housing Authority immediately of any change to your household composition and failure to do so may result in the relevant penalties being applied.

17. I am a tenant who wants to apply for a transfer. What do I need to do?

Please refer to FAQ for Transfers and Rightsizing.

18. Anti-Social Behaviour

Carlow County Council's adopted Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is available on our website www.carlow.ie. The policy brings in the legislative changes under the Housing Act 2014. Housing Authorities have specific powers to take enforcement action on tenants of social housing units who are engaging in anti-social behaviour. Tenants engaged in ASB will be subjected to an escalating warning system which can ultimately lead to the tenants being excluded from a local authority estate or being evicted from the property they are renting. Carlow County Council may also refuse to let a dwelling or consent to the purchase of a dwelling on the grounds of ASB.

If you have a complaint in relation to any tenant of Carlow County Council please fill in the complaint form on our website and email to estatemanagement@carlowcoco.ie. Your complaint will be investigated by our Tenant Liaison Officers. Anonymous complaints will not be entertained.

19. Adapted Housing for Disability

Any applicant or existing tenant who requires an adapted property for disability need must submit a HMD Form 1 along with an Occupational Therapist report detailing their household requirements. A variety of options will be considered including allocation, transfer and property adaptation. Adapted properties are not available for purchase under the Tenant Purchase scheme.

20. Income Reviews

Income eligibility for applicants is reviewed periodically under the SSHA and a full assessment of both eligibility and need is carried out at allocation of property stage.

For current tenants, income is assessed in accordance with the Council's Differential Rent scheme on a regular basis.

For both applicants and tenants, including HAP tenants, if your income changes, you must notify the Housing Section. Failure to do so may be considered as a breach of your tenancy and the relevant penalties will apply.

21. Appeals Process

If you disagree with any decision of the Housing Department you are required to submit an appeal in writing within 21 days of the date of the decision.

The appeal will be reviewed by an independent officer.

Contact us:
Housing Department
Tullow Civic Offices
Tullow
Co. Carlow

Housing Hub
Staplestown Road
Carlow

Housing – Maintenance	housingmaintenance@carlowcoco.ie	0599170372
Housing – Homeless Services	homeless@carlowcoco.ie	0599170357
Housing – Housing Access Payments (HAP)	hap@carlowcoco.ie	0599170369
Housing – Applications	housingapplication@carlowcoco.ie	0599170364 0599170368
Housing – Estate Management	estatemangement@carlowcoco.ie	0599172496
Housing – Control of Horses	controlofhorses@carlowcoco.ie	0599136296
Housing – Grants	housinggrants@carlowcoco.ie	0599170358
Housing – Rents	housingrents@carlowcoco.ie	059 9136210
Housing – Loans	loanapplications@carlowcoco.ie	059 9170362
Housing – RAS	ras@carlowcoco.ie	0599170370

